PUBLIC OPINION

IN BRAZIL ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

The UN Department of Public Information commissioned a public opinion poll in Brazil to assess the awareness, knowledge and image of the UN. The poll was conducted during May 1991.

■ THE RESULTS IN BRIEF

- A majority of Brazilians are familiar with the United Nations.
- More than a third of Brazilians gave positive evaluation of UN performance.
- Since 1975 there has been an increase among Brazilians in terms of awareness and approval rating of the UN.
- Knowledge about the UN is highest among older Brazilians and among news media consumers.
- A majority of those polled would like more information about the Organization's work in the areas of children, food, human rights, housing and AIDS.

AWARENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

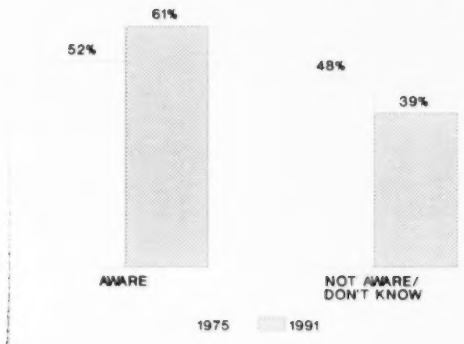

FIGURE 1

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE UN

Asked whether they had heard of the United Nations, 61 per cent of Brazilians answered in the affirmative. This compares with 52 per cent when the same question was asked by Gallup International in 1975. Results of the 1991 poll also showed that awareness was highest among respondents with at least a high school level of education (above 94 per cent). It was lowest among the poor, the rural population and the residents of the least developed regions of Brazil.

Eight per cent of Brazilians in the recent poll were able to name a UN institution or body. This shows a significant decline from 1975 when 14 per cent were able to name a UN institution.

ABILITY TO NAME A UN INSTITUTION

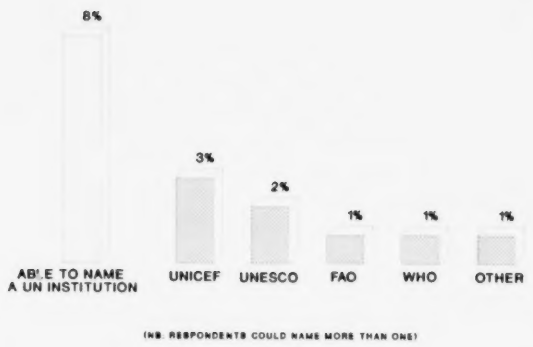

FIGURE 2

UN PERFORMANCE RATING

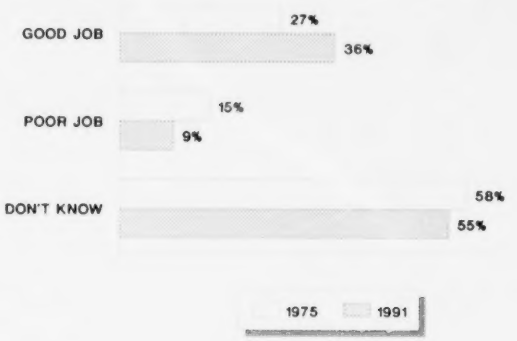

FIGURE 4

IDENTIFYING UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

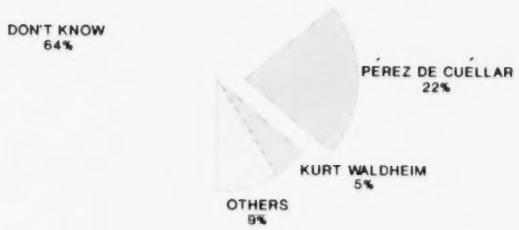

FIGURE 3

The institutions or bodies most mentioned were UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO and WHO. Four per cent of respondents erroneously identified various humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, as UN institutions.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Twenty-two per cent of Brazilians were able to identify Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as the current Secretary-General from a list of five UN Secretaries-General since 1945.

Respondents who had completed at least a high school education, and those from the Southern and Northern Midwest regions tended to more correctly identify the current Secretary-General. There were no regional differences among those who incorrectly identified the Secretary-General.

RATING UN PERFORMANCE

In the 1991 poll 36 per cent of Brazilians believe the UN is doing a good job as opposed to a poor job. This positive evaluation is found among all demographic groups, although older and more educated respondents tended to give slightly lower evaluations of the UN. Fifty-five per cent of those surveyed did not evaluate the performance of the Organization.

UN performance ratings have significantly improved since 1975. The Gallup poll taken that year and again in 1985 showed good job ratings of 27 per cent. Although the ratio of positive to negative evaluation of the UN has increased since 1975, the number of respondents not being able to venture an opinion remained virtually the same.

REASONS FOR UN PERFORMANCE RATING

Positive and negative evaluation of the Organization centered around its role in promoting world peace. The most prominent reason for a good job rating was the UN's handling of the Gulf crisis. Aid to poor people and to developing countries, assistance to victims of wars and calamities and the work of the UN in health, education and the environment were also mentioned as reasons for a positive performance rating.

The UN role in the Gulf crisis was also dominant among those who gave a negative evaluation of the Organization. Other reasons mentioned included perceptions of partiality, insufficient aid to Brazil and not enough assistance to the poor.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Sixty per cent of Brazilians cited television as their prime source of information on the United Nations. This was followed by newspapers, radio, magazines, and books. Five per cent mentioned various institutions as sources of information.

Those who use magazines and newspapers as their main sources of information are more knowledgeable about the Organization. Respondents who are exposed regularly to news, regardless of the medium, have a higher level of

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE UN

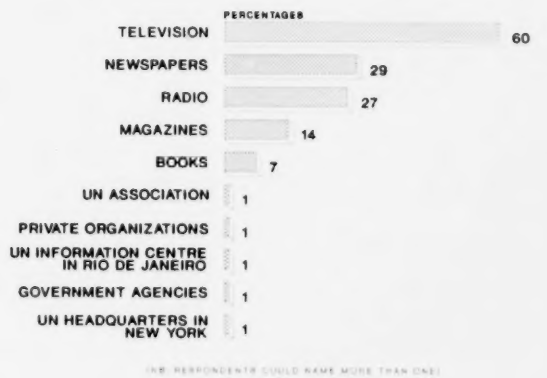

FIGURE 5

TEACHING ABOUT THE UN

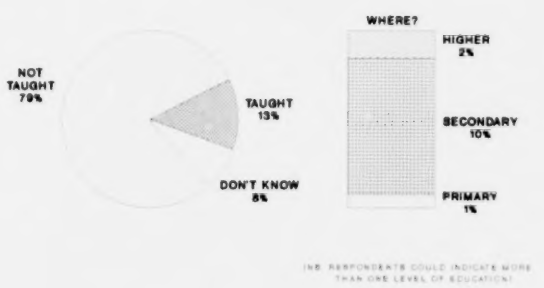

FIGURE 6

knowledge about the UN than those who are not.

Thirteen per cent of Brazilians recalled being taught about the UN at school—a majority in secondary/high school.

INTEREST IN UN ISSUES

Although most Brazilians appeared interested in most UN issues, those dealing with children, food problems, human rights and environmental protection received the highest number of mentions.

INTEREST IN UNITED NATIONS ISSUES

	VERY INTERESTED %	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED %	NOT INTERESTED %
CHILDREN'S ISSUES	84	8	5
WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS	78	10	7
HUMAN RIGHTS	76	12	7
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	74	12	9
IMPROVING HOUSING CONDITIONS	73	13	8
AIDS	71	11	13
REFUGEES & DISASTER RELIEF	69	15	11
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN	68	17	10
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	64	18	12
CRIME PREVENTION	64	15	16
DRUG ABUSE	63	13	20
INT'L PEACE AND SECURITY	62	20	14
POPULATION ISSUES	61	19	13
THE WORK OF THE UN IN GENERAL	59	20	13
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	59	18	16
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT	58	21	15
DISARMAMENT	55	21	19
INT'L DEBT CRISIS	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
INT'L LAW & TREATIES	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DECOLONIZATION	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

(NB: SOME RESPONDENTS INDICATED "DON'T KNOW" OR GAVE NO ANSWER TO SOME OF THE ISSUES)

FIGURE 7

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

The poll was conducted in Brazil by IBOPE, which interviewed a nationwide representative sample of 3,650 men and women aged 16 and over. The interviews were carried out face-to-face in respondents' homes during May 1991. Accuracy was checked for at least twenty per cent of the cases. The margin of sampling error is estimated at $\pm$ 3 per cent.

The Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit of the United Nations Department of Public Information undertakes public opinion polls to "analyze trends of public opinion throughout the world about the activities of the United Nations and the extent to which an informed understanding of the work of the United Nations is being secured" (General Assembly resolution 13(I), annex 1, paragraph 13 of 13 February 1946).

CONCLUSION

More than one half of Brazilians have heard of the United Nations and their opinion about the Organization is generally favourable.

Both positive and negative attitudes towards the UN seem to be based on their assessment of how well the Organization handled the recent Gulf crisis. With regards to interest in UN issues, Brazilians would like to receive more information on UN activities related to social and economic development.

The media play a significant role in how Brazilians learn about the UN. Television is the most used medium, followed by newspapers and radio. Those exposed to news, regardless of the medium, have a better knowledge of the United Nations.

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